

12 September 2012**Agenda Item:10****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND
CULTURAL SERVICES AND THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ADULT
SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****ESTABLISHMENT OF A MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH)****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - a. inform Policy Committee of the final arrangements for establishing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Nottinghamshire
 - b. seek approval to establish a number of staff posts
 - c. seek approval for funding from County Council contingencies.

Information and Advice

2. On 11 January 2012, Cabinet endorsed the establishment of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as part of the new operating model for Children's Social Care. The aim of the MASH is to significantly improve the sharing of information between agencies, improve decision-making by taking a more holistic view and therefore help to protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse.

Overview of the MASH

3. Most MASHs nationally deal with safeguarding concerns about children but not adults. Research highlighted the clear advantages of taking a broader family approach and as a result, the Nottinghamshire MASH will deal with safeguarding concerns about both vulnerable children and adults, providing a faster, more co-ordinated and more consistent response from partner agencies and services to safeguarding concerns.
4. The MASH will act as the first point of contact for Children's Social Care and for safeguarding concerns about adults. It will involve representatives from Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Police and Health working together, co-located in one place. Virtual links will exist to other services and agencies which are not located in the MASH, such as preventative services, the Probation Trust and District Councils.

5. The MASH will receive safeguarding concerns from professionals such as teachers and doctors as well as members of the public and family members. For those concerns that meet the threshold for Adult or Children's Social Care involvement, representatives from the different agencies in the MASH will collate information from their respective sources to build up a holistic picture of the circumstances of the case and the associated risks to the child or adult. As a result, better decisions will be made about what action to take and support will be targeted on the most urgent cases. Better co-ordination between agencies will lead to an improved service for children, adults and families.
6. The MASH will also provide advice and guidance for professionals with safeguarding concerns about a child or adult. This will help to enforce the application of need thresholds, improve the quality of information provided and ensure that the appropriate level of support is offered. For those concerns that do not meet the threshold for Adult or Children's Social Care involvement, the MASH will ensure that cases are passed to early intervention or other services as and when this is appropriate.
7. The MASH will be based at the Customer Services Centre at Mercury House and will build on the model and success of the Dedicated Adult Access Team which is already located there. It is anticipated that a significant number of contacts will be addressed at an early stage by a new team of MASH Officers; this represents a considerable change to how safeguarding concerns are currently handled. Working under the close supervision of qualified Adult and Children's social work professionals, MASH Officers will swiftly advise and signpost referrers to the most appropriate service, thereby filtering contacts and reducing the number of contacts being escalated to social work professionals inappropriately. In Adult Social Care having a single point of contact for social care enquiries staffed by a mix of Customer Service Advisors, Social Work and Occupational Therapy staff has resulted in over 60% of contacts being resolved directly by the Customer Service team with an overall reduction of 30% in referrals to dedicated Adult Social Care teams.

MASHs in Other Areas

8. The MASH model originated in Devon and this project is drawing extensively on their experience. Several other local authorities have successfully established MASHs: Staffordshire, Stoke City, Haringey, Hackney, Harrow, Norfolk, Birmingham City, Hull and York. MASHs are also being set up in every London Borough, in Northamptonshire and in Nottingham City. The design of the MASH in Nottinghamshire is actively building upon best practice elsewhere in the country.

Progress to Date

9. A Strategic Steering Group for the project has been established since December 2011, with senior representatives from the Police, Health, Probation Trust, District Councils and Fire & Rescue Service, as well as NCC services. The Group is chaired by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Cultural Services. Robust governance arrangements are in place, with

progress reported to the Children's Social Care Transformation Programme Board and Adult Social Care Business Improvement Board and then via the Programme Director's Board to the Corporate Leadership Team. In addition, members of the Strategic Steering Group have been keeping relevant stakeholder boards updated e.g. Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board, Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board, Police Command, PCT Board etc.

10. An Operational Group has also been working to design and implement the MASH, jointly chaired by a Superintendent from Nottinghamshire Police and the Service Director for Children's Social Care. Five workstreams have been working since February 2012, each focusing on a different element of the MASH: Organisation Structure, Business Process, Technology, Information-Sharing Agreement and Volume & Performance Analysis. Each has a workstream lead and a multi-agency working group that has collectively designed and refined their element, ensuring that stakeholders have been fully engaged in developing the model in Nottinghamshire.
11. Progress to date has been good, thanks to the hard work of operational staff and senior representatives involved in the project. Partner agencies and NCC services have given and maintained a very strong commitment to the project, and this has been backed up by resources.
12. Significant elements of progress are noted below:
 - best practice research has been completed, highlighting lessons learnt, useful documents and contacts from existing and emerging MASHs across the country
 - a detailed volume analysis has estimated the likely demand upon the MASH, using this to inform the number of posts within the organisation structure and the design of the business process
 - the organisation structure for the MASH has been agreed by the Strategic Steering Group for final approval by Policy Committee. This incorporate roles, job descriptions and staff funding arrangements
 - business processes, describing how the MASH will operate in detail, have been agreed
 - an Information Sharing Agreement has been developed and is being widely consulted upon, in preparation for sign-off by the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board in the Autumn
 - technology requirements have been gathered from partner agencies and services, informing the design of technical solutions and associated cost estimates
 - the office layout for the MASH at Mercury House has been agreed, with minor building work due to start in early September
 - draft performance measures for the MASH have been developed
 - existing posts have been filled through enabling and preference processes. New posts have been advertised, at the discretion of the relevant

Corporate Director, to ensure that post holders are in place in time to undertake induction training prior to go-live at the end of November

- extensive communication activity has taken place since the start of the project, with presentations, face-to-face briefings, electronic bulletins and web pages all being used to engage stakeholders. An ongoing more detailed communication plan is being developed for the run-up to go live to ensure that key parties and the public are aware of the existence of the MASH, its function and how to access it.

Timescales

13. The MASH is on track to go live in the week commencing 26 November 2012, with strong commitment from the partner agencies and services to achieve this. Support for implementation is being provided by ICT, Property, Ways of Working, HR, Communications and the Improvement Programme.

Gateway Review

14. A Gateway Review, involving an independent external consultant, was conducted in May 2012, examining project progress through interviews with a range of stakeholders, assessing confidence in project delivery and project management. The review graded the project as 'Amber/Green' overall and made a number of recommendations, which have all been addressed. The Gateway Review report is available as a background paper. A second Gateway Review is scheduled for early October 2012.

Organisation Structure

15. The proposed MASH organisation structure is shown in Appendix A. It has been developed by the Organisation Structure working group, based upon the developing business process and the analysis of contact volumes and existing workloads. This has been further validated and refined by consultation with service representatives and senior stakeholders. The organisation structure was agreed by the Strategic Steering Group on 30 May 2012 for final approval by Policy Committee.
16. The organisation structure is designed to ensure that safeguarding concerns are effectively received, to collate information from different services and partner agencies, use this combined information to decide which team outside the MASH should handle the case and then pass the case to that team with the associated information. The MASH will not hold cases but will pass them to operational teams within a matter of minutes or hours as required, based upon assessed risk. Staff from the MASH will not be carrying out any fieldwork interventions i.e. visits to children, adults or families, as these will be carried out by the relevant operational teams.
17. The organisation structure is designed to enable effective partnership working whilst maintaining the integrity of professional decision-making. Staff working in the MASH will continue to be employed by their own organisation. Many staff will maintain dual reporting lines (matrix management), reporting to one

person for oversight of professional decisions and a different person for day-to-day management and administrative purposes. In some cases the professional oversight will be provided by staff outside the MASH - a Children's Social Care Service Manager outside the MASH will provide professional oversight of the Children's Social Care Team Managers; an Adult Social Care Team Manager outside the MASH will provide professional oversight of the Adult Social Care Advanced Social Work Practitioners.

18. A temporary MASH Operational Manager has been recruited on a 12 month contract to help develop the MASH and the supporting processes, protocols and strategies; ensure effective implementation of the MASH and to manage the MASH for 9 months after go-live ensuring that any teething problems are resolved quickly as the new arrangements bed in. Once the MASH is operational the post-holder will be responsible for the initial day-to-day running of the MASH, ensuring that cases are handled swiftly and appropriately; performance management of the MASH against agreed targets and measures and ensuring that partner agencies and services work effectively together to deliver the desired outcomes. This post will be reviewed after 12 months to determine the precise nature of the role required going forward. It is clear that a permanent MASH Operational Manager will be required.
19. Given the challenging timescales set for the implementation of the MASH it has been necessary to recruit to the post of MASH Operational Manager prior to the Policy Committee meeting. This will enable the required pre-employment checks and notice period to be served by the preferred candidate so that they can take up post directly after the Policy Committee decision.
20. An experienced manager has been recruited into the post who was involved in setting up the first MASH in Devon and will therefore be able to apply lessons learnt from Devon's experience directly in Nottinghamshire and should be able to settle quickly into the role. As Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs are relatively new developments, there is a small pool of people with the direct experience of operating a MASH. In order to recruit a candidate with this experience it will be necessary to pay a small market factor supplement of £6,801 for the temporary period of this post. This is important to ensuring the establishment and effective implementation of a MASH in Nottinghamshire to the required timescale. The alternative would be an agency worker at significantly higher cost.

Budget and funding arrangements

21. It is proposed that with the Policy Committee's approval, recurring annual costs for the MASH of £552,000, including some staffing costs described in paragraph 23, are met from County Council contingencies.
22. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between partner agencies located at the MASH will include consideration of the ongoing funding arrangements.
23. Approval is being sought to establish the following posts:

- a. 1 fte MASH Operational Manager for 12 months (Band F plus market factor supplement of £6,801) – funded from County Council contingencies. The post is then subject to review
 - b. 2 fte permanent Senior MASH Officers (Grade 5, £20,858 – £23,708) – funded from County Council contingencies
 - c. 13 fte permanent MASH Officers (Grade 4, £17,802 - £20,198) – funded from County Council contingencies
 - d. 3 fte permanent Adult Social Care Advanced Social Work Practitioners (Band C, £32,800 - £37,206) – funded by the Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection department.
24. All other permanent County Council posts are already included in the establishment of the Children, Families and Cultural Services department – 4 fte Children’s Social Care Team Managers, 8 fte Children’s Social Care Social Workers and 5.5 fte Business Support Administrators.
25. As a new initiative, the MASH will be formally reviewed and evaluated in order to identify cashable efficiency savings, as a result of the improved effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements. Once these efficiency savings have been identified, proposals for changes will be put to elected Members and, if approved, these proposals will be implemented to deliver the savings.

Other Committees

26. If this report is approved by Policy Committee, update reports about the MASH will be taken to the next meetings of the Adult Social Care and Health Committee (1 October) and the Children and Young People’s Committee (8 October).

Other Options Considered

27. Consideration has been given to a number of options to help improve information sharing between agencies. New operational procedures and regular review meetings have helped agencies to work more closely together, although difficulties remain. The use of new technology and revised systems and processes can help enable such information sharing but do not bring the benefits of co-locating staff from different agencies in the same room. After consideration at a strategic and operational level, and an examination of the advantages and disadvantages of MASH operations in other areas, it was agreed that a MASH would be the most effective solution for Nottinghamshire.

Reasons for Recommendations

28. The MASH will significantly improve the sharing of information between agencies, helping to protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse.
29. It will bring the following benefits:

- a reduction in the number of children and adults inappropriately receiving costly services from social care, health, the police and others
- closer partnership working and clearer accountability, with agencies providing a faster, more co-ordinated and consistent response to safeguarding concerns, ensuring that vulnerable children and adults are kept safe
- an improved 'journey' for the child, adult and family with more preventative support and better informed services provided at the right time
- a reduction in the number of inappropriate referrals and re-referrals
- a more straightforward and responsive process for the professional or citizen raising a safeguarding concern, with clear guidance and support.

Statutory and Policy Implications

30. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

31. Service users will receive faster, more co-ordinated assistance from operational teams as a result of the swifter, better informed decisions being taken in the MASH. In addition, a greater number of children and families will receive support from preventative services, dealing with problems before they escalate.

Financial Implications

32. It is proposed that with the Policy Committee's approval, recurring annual costs for the MASH of £552,000 including some staffing costs, as described in paragraph 23, are met from County Council contingencies.
33. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between partner agencies located at the MASH will include consideration of the ongoing funding arrangements.

Crime and Disorder Implications

34. Co-locating social care professionals with Police colleagues will improve the sharing of information and hence the handling of crimes related to safeguarding and domestic violence. As more data is gathered, analysis will help identify risk factors and enable better prediction of potential vulnerability, so that support can be targeted accordingly.

Safeguarding Implications

35. The MASH will significantly improve the safeguarding of children and adults, helping partner agencies to make faster, more informed decisions that mean

children, adults and families receive appropriate, co-ordinated support more quickly.

Human Resources Implications (BC 13/8/12)

36. The relevant trade unions have been consulted on the establishment of the MASH through regular ongoing meetings with the Service Director, Children's Social Care, as part of the wider transformation programme. A number of existing posts have been provisionally allocated to existing employees through the programme's enabling process. Approval to advertise new posts in advance of this Committee was also obtained due to the need to recruit staff in advance of the implementation date for training and induction purposes. This has included recruitment to the post of MASH Operational Manager as detailed in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1) the final arrangements for establishing the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Nottinghamshire be noted.
- 2) funding of £552,000 from County Council contingencies for the recurring annual costs of the MASH, including some staffing costs as described in paragraph 23, be approved.
- 3) the following posts be established with immediate effect:
 - a. 1 fte post of MASH Operational Manager for 12 months (Band F plus temporary market factor supplement). The post is then subject to review.
 - b. 2 fte permanent Senior MASH Officer posts (Grade 5)
 - c. 13 fte permanent MASH Officer posts (Grade 4)
 - d. 3 fte permanent Adult Social Care Advanced Social Work Practitioner posts (Band C).
- 4) Policy Committee receives a progress report on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub six months after it opens.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 04/09/12)

37. The Policy Committee has delegated authority to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (NDR 04/09/12)

38. The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 32 and 33 of the report.

Background Papers

MASH Gateway Review – May 2012

Vacancy protocol proforma

Business case template – Market Factor supplement

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

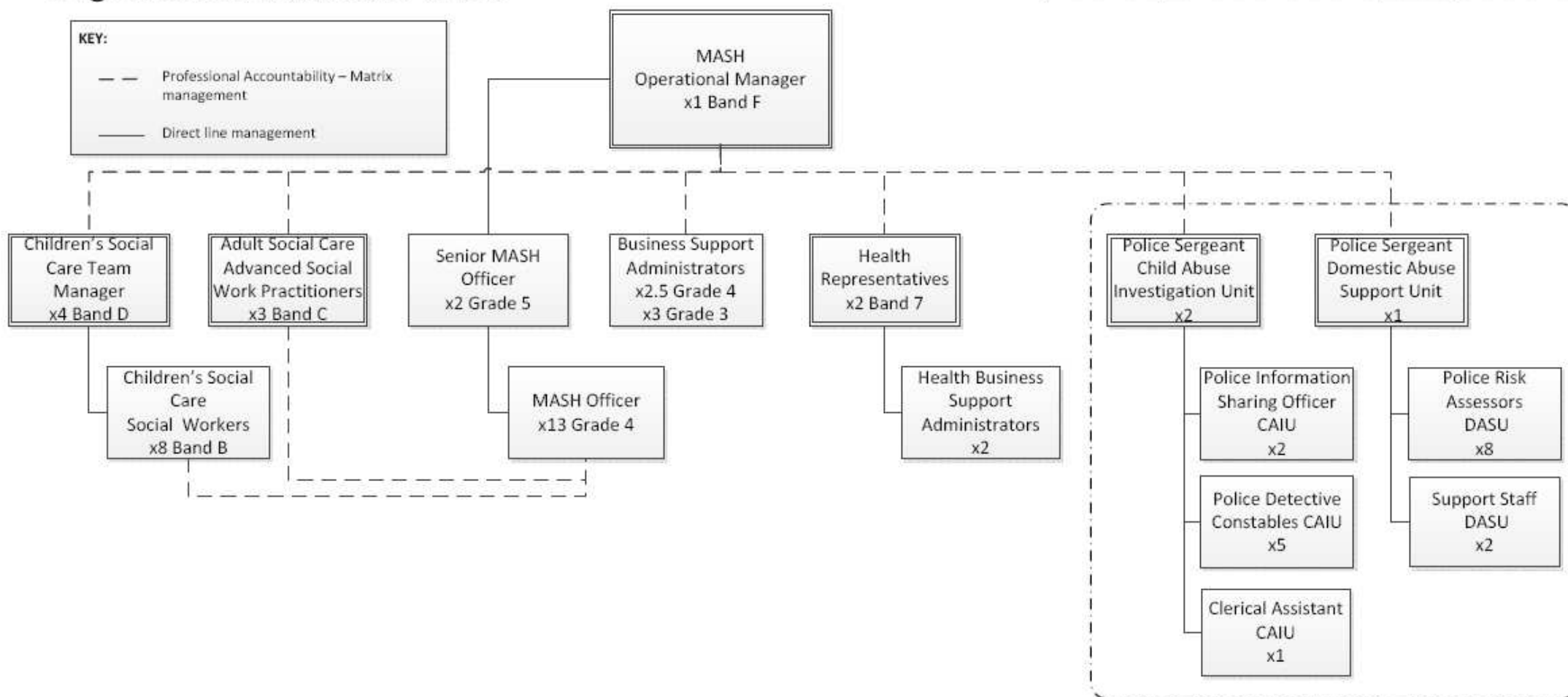
Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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Appendix A – MASH organisation structure

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Organisation Structure v1.06



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|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| File Name: | MASH Organisational Structure v1.06 | | |
| Created by: | Guy Edgar | Date: | 08/08/2012 |
| Approved by: | MASH Strategic Steering Group | Date: | 30/05/2012 |